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STATE DEPARTMENT’S 2013 HUMAN TRAFFICKING REPORT: AN “INTERNATIONAL TREASURE” TO COMBAT MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 19, 2013) – Global human rights agency International Justice Mission (IJM) today congratulates Secretary of State John Kerry and the U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons on the release of the 2013 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report.

Holly Burkhalter, IJM vice president of government and advocacy stated: “The TIP Report is an international treasure. Its honest accounting of slavery and trafficking in the U.S. and around the world is a tool that benefits government reformers, anti-trafficking activists, and most of all, enslaved children, women and men.”

The annual TIP Report includes the ranking of 188 countries into one of four tiers, including the Tier II watch list. Three countries of particular significance to the U.S. were downgraded from the Tier II watch list to Tier III, the lowest ranking in this year’s report: Uzbekistan, Russia and China.

Human rights groups, including IJM, welcomed this as an important departure from past years in which other diplomatic considerations outweighed anti-slavery concerns, and is a welcome course correction to the political drift of tier rankings in recent years.

“Grade inflation is no service to slavery-burdened countries,” continued IJM’s Burkhalter.

“Trafficking and slavery undermine government institutions, destroys public trust, and exploits the poor and powerless. It is in every government’s best interest to build law enforcement institutions with the will and capacity to professionally apprehend and prosecute criminals who sell human beings so that this violent crime simply dries up.”

IJM works in 16 communities in 10 developing countries to bring rescue to victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. IJM works with local officials to secure immediate victim rescue and aftercare, to prosecute perpetrators and to ensure that public justice systems - police, courts and laws - effectively protect the poor.

To learn more about IJM’s efforts to combat human trafficking, visit www.ijm.org.

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